

Now the appropriators have to make those judgments on the priorities, and we will have to reconcile between the House and Senate and get the President's signature.

That is what we should be doing—setting the priorities for our country but having a reasonable pool of money to deal with discretionary spending. We have been denied that for many years. Now we have the opportunity to do what Congress should do and set the priorities for this country.

In addition, we have the drug problems. I probably have more meetings in my State on dealing with the drug crisis. It is in every community in Maryland and this Nation. I hope we will see increased Federal participation in that area.

Another part of the budget agreement was to extend the debt limit for 2 years. This, to me, is one of the absurdities of what we do on debt limits. We incur money—we incur debt—and then we put a limit as to whether we will pay for the bills we incurred. You don't default on your debt. That is not what America is about. We have to control what we spend, but we have to pay for what we spend. We have to honor our debt. Our credit ratings were at risk. The Secretary of Treasury made this one of his top priorities. I agreed with him on this issue. Now we no longer have the fear that America will not honor its debt.

The bill also gets rid of sequestration. Good riddance. This was put in as a placeholder for us to deal with the budget deficit. It didn't work in that way. All it did was cause uncertainty, and in many respects, it would have required across-the-board cuts. That is not the way we should do business. We have to make decisions. Sequestration could have been used for us to avoid making the tough decisions. We have to do that ourselves.

The bottom line is the budget agreement gets rid of that and gives us a much better chance of avoiding a government shutdown, which makes absolutely no sense at all, and of, hopefully, not having to deal with continuing resolutions. Continuing resolutions put us on autopilot because we can't pass a budget. Now, I hope we will be able to pass budgets and avoid not only shutdowns but continuing resolutions.

I want to emphasize this point. Discretionary spending has become a smaller part of the overall budget of this country. It has been a shrieking song. So why do we have growing deficits? By the way, discretionary spending is at historically low levels in this country. Revenues, unfortunately, are also at historically low levels. In other words, we are not raising the traditional amount of revenue that is necessary for us to pay our bills.

I come from a family who believes you have to pay your bills. I think it is wrong for us to spend money today and ask our children and grandchildren to pay for our current spending. We should have the courage to provide the

revenues that are necessary to pay our bills. Instead, what have we done? We have cut revenues again and again so our deficit today is not sustainable. We have to deal with it.

The major culprit has been these irresponsible tax cuts, the last of which went primarily to the wealthiest people in the country. According to the Congressional Budget Office, it will add \$1.9 trillion to the deficit over the next decade. That is the culprit of the deficits, and that is what we should be dealing with.

I have heard a lot of my colleagues come in here and lament this agreement. They have said it is going to add to the deficit. Some of these people are the same people who voted for the tax cut. Let's be direct about this. We have to have the revenues that are necessary to pay for what we incur in spending.

Yes, there is another area in which we can do better, and that is in healthcare spending, much of which is mandatory spending, not discretionary spending. These are the appropriations that have to be made. We can do a much better job of reining in the cost of healthcare. We had a chance to do that this week, but we didn't take full advantage of that.

I am a member of the Senate Committee on Finance. We passed a bill to deal with the escalating costs of prescription drugs. Today, in Maryland, I have been told one out of every four healthcare dollars is spent on medicines. We pay so much more in America for medicines than do the other industrialized nations of the world.

Yes, we have recommended to the Senate body a bill to deal with the cost of prescription medicines. It will deal with the issue of putting a cap on the escalation of the current drug prices. It will put a cap on the out-of-pocket costs that the people on Medicare Part D will have to pay. That is good. Those are two good things.

We had a chance to really make a difference by eliminating the prohibition in the current law that prevents Medicare from negotiating the costs of medicines. Think about that for one moment. Where else do we do that? We tell businesses they can't leverage all of their buying to get the lowest possible prices, and we tell Medicare it can't leverage the total market it is paying in order to get the best price on prescription medicines.

What does that mean? That means we are overpaying. Whether you are paying it in Part D premiums, whether you are paying it in private insurance premiums, or whether you are paying it as a taxpayer, we are paying too much for medicines. It is the primary reason the international price on medicines is so much lower than what we pay in America.

We had a chance to deal with it this week, and we didn't. We will have another opportunity when the bill comes to the floor, and I hope we will do the right thing by removing the prohibi-

tion that is in the current law on negotiating price.

I am very pleased we got this budget agreement done. No, I am not pleased about the deficit, but I recognize that we need to deal with revenues and that we need to deal with costs like prescription drugs, which were not part of today's vote. I hope, when we return in September, the good will we have used in order to get this budget agreement done will continue and that the appropriators will be able to reconcile their appropriations bills before October 1 so we will not need continuing resolutions and so there will be no threat of a government shutdown.

I hope we will have the same type of bipartisan commitment by which people have expressed their outrage on the growth of the deficit in order to deal with the real causes of the deficit. We will have a chance on prescription medicines to deal with those costs. Let's have the courage to sit down and make sure we raise the revenues we need in order to pay for our expenses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SPECIALIST MICHAEL ISAIAH NANCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise on my behalf and on the behalf of Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH to express my condolences to the family of SPC Michael Isaiah Nance. He and fellow paratrooper, PFC Brandon Jay Kreischer, of Ohio, gave their lives in service to our country on July 29 in Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan.

The early reports on their deaths are that they were shot by an Afghan soldier at a military base—a so-called green on blue attack. The incident is under investigation. Isaiah was 24 years old. Isaiah was the 96th Illinois servicemember to have been killed in Afghanistan since our invasion began in 2001, and he is 1 of 2,289 American troops who have died there since that invasion. He was a proud and outstanding member of the 82nd Airborne. Since enlisting in 2017, he earned the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Infantryman Badge, and he qualified as a Basic Parachutist.

As a member of the Nance family noted, "He loved his country and wanted to serve his country. He died doing something that he loved."

Isaiah arrived in Afghanistan just a few weeks ago, shortly after a trip to Europe with his mother Shawn Gregoire. He and thousands of other Americans who are still there were deployed in support of our NATO-led mission to train, advise, and assist the Afghan Army, a mission known as Operation Freedom's Sentinel. As fate would have it, when uniformed Army personnel arrived at his house to break this terrible news to his family, much of the family had already gathered after having attended the funeral of the Nances' great-grandfather, Sam

Forest, Jr., who had served in the U.S. Army during the Korean war.

As one member of Isaiah's family noted, "It was the worst day in our family's history."

Isaiah was raised by his mother and grandparents in Chatham, which is on the South Side of Chicago. He attended college in Florida. After 2 years, he insisted to his mother that he wanted to join the Army. He wanted to continue his family's tradition of military service not only as his great-grandfather had but also as several members of his family still do in the Chicago Police Department.

He told his mother he wanted to pursue his dream. He promised her that after it was over, he would finish his degree. Shortly after enlisting, he completed basic training and earned his wings at the Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA. He became an Automatic Rifleman who was assigned to Company B, First Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the storied 82nd Airborne Division.

The motto of the 82nd Airborne is "Airborne all the way." Isaiah lived every bit of this motto in his faithful service to America and with his family and friends. He enjoyed wrestling, traveling the world, and cheering for his beloved Chicago White Sox. He was a foodie. He loved good soul food. Perhaps, most especially, he loved spending time with his younger brother.

As a member of his family noted, he was "energetic, athletic, funny, humble"—all of the things you would want your kid to be.

Every Member of the Senate would be proud to have a son like Isaiah. All of the Members join me in expressing their condolences to his family at this painful moment and in grieving with them over Isaiah's bright light—ended all too soon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, we just had our last vote here in the Senate before going into the August recess, and I am looking forward to being home in Ohio during the week. I come here during the week and go home on the weekends, but during this August recess period, it gives me a chance to get all around the State because we are home during the workweek.

I will be in a few dozen counties by the end of the recess, but I am going to start by being at the Ohio State Fair tomorrow. Tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m., we have the biggest ag event in the State, which is our annual ag

breakfast. I will be hearing from farmers from all over the State.

It has been a tough year for us in Ohio. Because of all the water, we have had lots of farmers who weren't able to plant their crops, and, therefore, there are some fields that are bare. Others who did plant their crops have found that their crops aren't doing very well because of all of the water damage early in the year.

So it has been a hard year, and, frankly, it has been a hard few years in terms of the price, particularly, of corn and soybeans. On top of that, we have less exports of soybeans, which I hope is now being addressed with the new agreements being made with relation to China in particular, but that has put pressure on price, because without having those additional overseas markets, it has had the effect of lowering the price, particularly for soybeans and corn. On top of that, it has just been generally a tough time in farm country in terms of the price of inputs going up and the price of the product being flat.

So my hope is that tomorrow I will get more input from farmers all across the State, and we will be able to continue to talk about the things we are doing.

I supported the U.S. Department of Agriculture providing some emergency loans and grants to Ohio farmers to get us through this season to avoid bankruptcies and to get people back on their feet. That money is now beginning to flow, I am happy to say. We are beginning to see some progress. The new farm bill is helping.

So my hope is that we will see better weather here going into the end of the season for these crops, that the harvest season will be better, and that we will be able to get back on our feet.

Also tomorrow, after touring the fair, I will be having some meetings with the business community, talking about what is working and what is not working in terms of regulations and taxes.

I will also be meeting with business leadership about how to get these new opportunity zones in the tax bill up and going. At those meetings, we will have community leaders and we will have people from neighborhoods that have had a tough time. Even during the economic growth, we have seen that some neighborhoods have been left behind. They still have relatively high unemployment, and they still have real problems of stubborn poverty. These opportunity zones are a perfect example there. This actually puts money into these communities by lowering and sometimes removing altogether the capital gains taxes for people if they agree to invest.

I will be talking to small businesses and housing advocates who are excited about this and see how this is working in Columbus, OH.

I will also be in Youngstown, OH, early next week, talking about this same topic, as well as some other economic development issues we have

there in terms of how we deal with the Lordstown plant, the plant that General Motors, unfortunately, has chosen to walk away from, which is very discouraging.

So we will be all over the State.

On Saturday, I will be at the largest gathering in the country of watercraft, which is the annual Paddlefest, with more kayaks and canoes on the Ohio River than any other event in the country. I will be participating in a charity race—I think this is an 11-mile race this year—with my son, going down the Ohio River, all for a good cause. I look forward to that as well.

I will be all over the State. It is an opportunity to visit the State, talk to constituents, hear what is going on, and try to be more helpful here in Washington to address the real concerns we have in Ohio.

One of the things I will be doing next weekend is visiting the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. I will be touring the park, looking at what some of their maintenance needs are, and talking to the Park Rangers.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is actually the 13th most visited national park in America. You probably haven't heard of it, unless you are from Ohio. But if you are from Akron or Cleveland, you certainly know about it because it is nestled right in between these two big cities, and it gets a lot of visitors and a lot of school kids. It is an incredible park because it is really a suburban and urban, as well as rural, park all at once. There is a lot of outdoor education going on there. There is a beautiful river that runs through it, the Cuyahoga River. There is also a train that can commute you back and forth. I will be there with Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, doing a kayak trip down the river, again looking at some of the needs the park has.

This leads me to a topic I had hoped to discuss on the floor yesterday, but because of a string of votes we were unable to do so. I was going to be out here on the floor giving a colloquy with some of my colleagues—Senator ALEXANDER, Senator WARNER, Senator KING, and others. We were going to talk about the need for us to provide more repairs in our national parks.

Unfortunately, Cuyahoga Valley National Park is one of those parks badly in need of it. We have about a \$48 million maintenance backlog. What does that mean? It means that every year we do fund the parks, but we don't fund these capital expenses that are needed. In the case of Cuyahoga Valley, as an example, there is an old railroad bridge they use for pedestrian traffic that is falling apart, and they may have to close it off soon. For every year that you don't attend to this deferred maintenance, things get worse and worse. Think about your own home. If you stop taking care of the roof, what happens? You get a leak, and then you have drywall damage. Then, you have paint damage. So the Federal Government over time has not taken care of